

Home and Community Care for Chronically Ill Children, by J. M. Perrin, M. W. Shayne, and S. R. Bloom. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1993:157 pp.

Between 1 and 2 million children in the United States have a severe chronic condition and require specialized care in their homes. By necessity, most of this care is provided by parents. However, in the past 10 years, an increasing, though insufficient, amount of that care has been provided by professionals. The need for this home care is expected to grow; for example, hospitals face increasing pressure to discharge in-patients as early as possible. This book addresses the issues surrounding the care of children with chronic conditions in their homes and communities.

To obtain materials, the authors interviewed families and professionals from 10 exemplary programs in the United States. They wrote the book to meet the needs of professionals, families, and policy-makers. This book is the only text to address in an in-depth manner home care in this population, and provides a timely follow-up to *Chronically Ill Children and Their Families* (Hobb N, Perrin JM, Ireys HT, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1985).

The major thesis of the text is that, because children with chronic conditions have the same needs as other children, their growth and development is best nurtured in their own homes and communities. The authors argue further that society has not fulfilled its responsibility to meet the needs of these special children. For example, health and related services, standards of care, policies, and financial support are inadequate to meet their needs. The topics covered include a review of the epidemiology of chronic conditions in childhood, the impact of these conditions on families, the system of services available for families, quality of home care, the costs and methods of financing home care, and recommendations for improving home care.

The book eloquently defines the key issues facing children with severe chronic conditions, describes how programs have tried to confront those issues, and makes proposals to address them nationally. The text is clearly written and reflects the wide experience of the authors; illustrations are used sparingly but well. The

list of references and subject index are sufficient, although no author index is provided. The sections on epidemiology and payment sources are superb. On the other hand, issues such as the inclusion of children with special needs in the classroom and alternatives to home care are mentioned only in passing. The use of checklists, such as criteria to evaluate the quality of home care or to evaluate access to care in the community, would have been beneficial. Also, the authors address the issues of financing health care; yet, they do not estimate the total cost of providing the services they recommend, a detail that would be of great importance to policy-makers.

Overall, the book is an excellent summary of the issues involving home care for children with chronic health conditions. It should inform the critical debate about home and community care for children and families for the next decade, and should be read by all those who care for or about these children.

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